

**Decision Maker:** ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** 18 June 2019

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** PETITION

**Contact Officer:** Keith Pringle, Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 0208 313 4508 E-mail: keith.pringle@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:** Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

**Ward:** All Wards

---

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme, if petitioners are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition they can present their case to a relevant PDS Committee, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 250 signatures. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the PDS Committee for up to five minutes, after which Members can debate the issues raised. The PDS Committee can resolve to recommend that the Executive, or relevant Portfolio holder, take action, or it can decide that no further action be taken.
- 1.2 A petition from Jo Hone, Chair of the Friends of Norman Park, has been received meeting the threshold for the lead petitioner to address the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee, calling for the Council to re-open the existing toilets at Norman Park or provide alternative facilities as a matter of urgency. Further details of the petition are set out at section 3 of this report.

---

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**The Committee is requested to consider the case made by the petitioners and, if necessary, recommend action to be taken by the Executive or the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services.**

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact:
- 

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Petitions are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
  2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment
- 

## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Services
  4. Total current budget for this head: £ 358,740
  5. Source of funding: 2019/20 Revenue Budget
- 

## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 8 (6.79fte)
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
- 

## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
- 

## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
- 

## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Not Applicable – Consideration of Petition
- 

## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

### 3. COMMENTARY

3.1 The Council's Petition Scheme allows for petitioners to present their case to a PDS Committee if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 250 signatures. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the PDS Committee for up to five minutes. When Members have considered the matter, they can choose whether or not to recommend any further action. One petition has been received that meets the above threshold.

3.2 A petition entitled "Public toilets for Norman Park and Elmfield Wood" was received on 2nd April 2019 from Jo Hone with the following request –

*"This 55 acre park is popular with a diverse community demographic - families, nurseries/schools, runners, footballers, cyclists, fitness trainers, (dog) walkers and model aeroplane flyers.*

*Lack of facilities severely limits the time park users have to enjoy this treasured green space and excludes many from visiting at all (such as the elderly, disabled people, children and pregnant women).*

*It is a travesty that the nearest public toilets are 1.5 – 2 miles away, especially given the park's size and user groups' needs. The park has huge potential for enhancement, but no basic facilities to accommodate this.*

*We, the undersigned, appeal to the London Borough of Bromley to re-open the existing toilets at Norman Park or provide alternative facilities as a matter of urgency."*

3.3 The petition contained 290 valid signatures from people who live, work or study in the borough, plus 494 valid online signatures.

3.4 The Council's response to the lead petitioner, Jo Hone, is as follows –

*"Thank You for your enquiry and for providing the petition regarding the opening of the toilets at Norman Park.*

*Currently we have 48 active participants across the Borough that are part of the Community Toilet Scheme that was initiated in 2011. We will be arranging another open request to give opportunity for local businesses, shops, pubs, restaurants and organisations to participate in the scheme and we will make sure to specifically approach those in and around the immediate vicinity of Norman Park to help accommodate your request.*

*We can confirm that following your petition we have directly approached the Facilities Management Services of the Norman Park Mencap building located just on the outskirts of Norman Park. While they do have a Tuck Shop style kiosk that is open to the public, they have advised that while they would support the scheme, however access for the public to their toilet facilities would severely compromise the safety of both public and disadvantaged members within The Lodge building and therefore they are unable to join the scheme.*

*I can confirm that I have liaised with our Delegated Sports Manager regarding the athletics track facilities and as the landowner we have requested that he makes the facility open to the public during exceptional circumstances where local community toilet scheme participants would not be seen to be sufficient. By exceptional circumstances we would refer to those with disabilities, the elderly and those with small children in desperate need.*

*The Council continually reviews all its services for value for money. In recent years with reduced central Government Funding, delivering value for money and a focus on front-line services has become even more critical. Following a trial, the community toilets were shown to provide an improved distribution of toilets across borough and supported local businesses; thus the scheme was rolled out across the borough. Separate toilet blocks typically have a high maintenance requirement and value for money directed the priority to direct funds to services and not buildings which the community toilet scheme delivers. Many Local Authorities have arrived at the same conclusion. The previous Mayor of London worked with major supermarkets and other business to open their toilets under the Open London scheme. These toilets complement the Council's Community Toilet scheme.*

*The Community Toilet Scheme was devised as a joint venture between the Council and local businesses like shops, pubs and restaurants to make their toilet facilities available for the public to use free of charge, and without the need to buy goods or services. Signs still indicate where the community toilets are located while the participating businesses display special stickers in their windows. Inside the premises, clear internal signs also direct the public to the toilet facilities so there is no need to ask for directions.*

*Significant research was undertaken and has shown that some people feel safer using a toilet in a shop or other retail premises rather than in an unattended public convenience. Some older people were also found to be apprehensive about being away from home because of the lack of accessible, safe toilet facilities. These were two examples considered when introducing the Community Toilet Scheme to Bromley and also demonstrated our efforts to positively address such issues by making the best results out of a difficult decision.*

*To reiterate, we will again be making contact within the vicinity of Norman Park to see if there are any other organisations who can formally join our Community Scheme and thus be added to the formal list of participants found on our website. Please see our current list on the link below for further details:*

[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/directory/36/community\\_and\\_public\\_toilets?page=1](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/directory/36/community_and_public_toilets?page=1)

*I can confirm that it is not the Council's intention to re-open the Norman Park toilets due to the cost diversion that would be required from front-line services such as Care Services and Environmental Services to meet the business rates, cleaning & maintenance costs, monitoring of the property both from a facility maintenance cost perspective, and also coupled with the Anti-Social Behaviour aspect which some Boroughs still suffer from.*

*If you are not satisfied with the Council's response, you (or your nominee) can address the next meeting of the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee for up to five minutes in support of your petition. The next meeting of the Committee is at 7pm on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – if you do want to speak at this meeting please contact the clerk, Keith Pringle, [keith.pringle@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:keith.pringle@bromley.gov.uk) or 020 8313 4508.”*

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children/Policy/Financial/Personnel/Legal/Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Petition submitted by Jo Hone